

GUIDE FOR RECORDS OFFICERS

1. In order to keep our collection meaningful and manageable, constant review and purging is necessary. However, no document may be destroyed unless a Records Officer has adjudged its relevancy to the CS mission. Although the R.O.'s are primarily responsible for this activity, every CS employee has a part in this housekeeping task and must be mindful of his or her daily responsibilities in records handling and management.

2. Every government and private organization as well as each person tends to accumulate and store documents. If these hoarded items are not periodically examined and the useless items removed, they increase in number and become unmanageable. Every organization and every person must carry out continuous housecleaning. The selection and purge of useless items, however, must be objective and businesslike.

A. What Records Cannot Be Destroyed

1. Before we can select documents for destruction, we must have a clear understanding of the type of materials which we must retain. 25X1A

b. Similarly, we must retain records about our own operational activities and personnel.

c. Often, we are entrusted with records and counter-intelligence material of other U. S. intelligence organizations. If such papers are relevant to the CS mission they should be retained because we have the responsibility for the maintenance of a central foreign counter-intelligence repository.

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d. At times we have the opportunity to exploit or gain possession of specialized collections of documents. These papers must be examined; those which further our mission should be selectively incorporated into our holdings.

e. Certain other documents, including overt publications, will contain data about intelligence activities and personnel and about persons and organizations inimical to the U.S. and its interest, not available from other sources. This type of information is vital to the conduct of our activities and must be kept in our collection.

B. The Records System - Some Common Misunderstandings

1. Because the Records Officer cannot delegate his responsibilities and his authority, it is incumbent on him to make certain that each document, enclosure, and attachment is read and competently judged before he authorizes destruction or retention. Records Officers and other CS personnel have not fully understood the implication of certain phases and procedures of the records system. For example:

a. "Microfilmed" Documents

What happens to the microfilm?

When reviewing documents, R.O.'s and others have observed a notation that the document was microfilmed. Therefore, they have assumed that the information is somehow retrievable and, hence, the document can be destroyed. Such is not the case. Authorization to destroy a "Microfilmed" document results in the destruction of all index cards leading to the document.

b. "Attachments and Enclosures"

When reviewing documents, R.O.'s have sometimes destroyed transmittal dispatches without reviewing the attachments which had originally arrived with the dispatches in question. Such destruction could result in the loss of all central reference to the attachment which might well be of CS interest. Therefore, all attachments and enclosures should be reviewed together with the transmittal dispatch and all the material should be marked at one time for retention or destruction.

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c. Infinity Symbol on Index Cards

The Infinity Symbol appearing as the final entry on an index card is an aid to name tracers because it signifies that all pertinent information on the person carded has been extracted from the document. This fact alone does not warrant destruction of the document which could have other valuable data and which, if destroyed, could result in the inadvertent destruction of that index card and possibly of other index cards. Records Officers, therefore, should judge documents for retention or destruction on their entire content and not on indexing that might have been done.

d. "Disseminated" Document

The fact that the content of a CS document has been "disseminated" is not, in itself, a valid reason for destruction of the CS document. The R. O. must be certain that names of CS value are indexed and that information of CS interest is retrievable.

e. Overt Material

A document consisting of information obtained from overt sources or materials should not be destroyed for that reason only. Unique, valuable CI information may come from overt sources. A name check in the Main Index will not yield this information unless it has been recorded there.

f. "Old Information"

No document should be destroyed because it is "old" or because it contains "old information." Similarly, the death of an agent does not justify destruction of information about the agent's past activities. The significance of the data and its pertinence to CS are the only factors which should govern destruction or retention.

g. Special or Auxiliary Indices

In addition to RID's Main Index, we have several special or auxiliary indices. For example, RID/Archives has an index comprised of cards referring to names in predecessor agency

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h. CS Copy and Extra Copy

Occasionally, when reviewing a file for destruction, R.O.'s or others may come upon a copy of a document that has not been stamped "CS Copy" but which, nevertheless, is of CS interest. In the absence of knowledge of the whereabouts of the CS Copy, the document should be retained even though retention could possibly result in duplication.

i. Coordination

A document which is of no value to one desk may be of critical importance to another. No R.O. may assume that a document contains nothing of value to another CS component, if information pertinent to another component is included in the paper. Therefore, coordination with all interested components must be carried out before material is destroyed or de-indexed. Failure to coordinate has been common failing in the destruction process.

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j. Locating "Lost Documents"

Frequently in a name trace, the copy-slo sheet will carry a notation such as: "Document cannot be located" or, "Document not in RID/Files." Authorization should not be granted for the removal of an index card leading to a document which cannot be located.

k. Destruction of Entire Files or File Categories

In the past some operational documents were erroneously classified into administrative file categories. Similarly, administrative documents and other papers of no permanent value

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c. It is preferred that a reply which pertains to the subject of a 201 file be placed in that file even if the reply does not otherwise meet current retention criteria.

3. Predecessor Agency Documents

Predecessor agency materials (such as OSS records) are not destroyed. They may be indexed, de-indexed, or re-indexed if appropriate. The R.O. for their purposes, should forward the materials to RID [REDACTED] Room 2615 L Building.

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